

*Office of the Bishop*

His Excellency  
Most Reverend James V. Johnston, Jr.  
Bishop of Kansas City – St. Joseph

Decree Amalgamating Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Raytown  
to St. John Francis Regis Parish, Kansas City

THE FACTS

1. Our Lady of Lourdes Parish was established in 1948 to specifically address the migration of families to the southeastern part of Jackson County following World War II, including Raytown, the Laurel Heights area of southeast Kansas City and Hickman Mills. Specifically, Reverend Edward Taney was appointed pastor on May 10, 1948, land was purchased twice in May 1948, and on June 22, 1948, according to the diocesan history, *This Far By Faith*, “all known parishioners were contacted by mail to advise them of the location and time of the first Mass” at 9 a.m. on June 27, 1948, at the Blue Ridge Roller Rink, 7600 Blue Ridge. The groundbreaking ceremony for the new church was held July 4, 1948, and its dedication on October 23, 1949. The parish grew from an initial 54 families to 340 families in fall 1950 and opened a school in June 1952 with both school and church (through six Sunday Masses) taxed to capacities beyond comfort.
2. To the immediate north, Saint Bernadette Parish was established in 1958 while to the south, Saint John Francis Regis Parish began in 1964, both necessitating changes to the Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Boundaries. While the Lourdes Credit Union was established in 1953, as many of the parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish were relocated into the new Saint John Francis Regis Parish boundaries, the credit union was re-named Lourdes-St. Regis Credit Union.
3. Saint John Francis Regis Parish was canonically established July 1, 1964, from territories belonging to Our Lady of Lourdes and Saint Catherine of Siena Parishes with the first issue of the *St. Regis News* newsletter beginning in August 1964. Groundbreaking for a worship center began on March 20, 1965, with the first Mass celebrated on June 26, 1966. The church and school were dedicated on November 6, 1966, with 400 students each enrolled in both the parish school and parish school of religion in the fall of 1971. In 1986, per *This Far By Faith*, “the Parish Planning Board recommended that the parish not consider building or even remodeling current buildings, but rather put the resources of the parish into insuring the continuity of its many current ministries in education and the spiritual and physical needs of its parishioners and community” prior to the dedication of its current parish church on May 25, 1997.
4. Following the diocesan-wide pastoral planning process throughout 2018, during 2020 a study of Blue Ridge Boulevard corridor parishes (principally Deanery V) was undertaken which

thoroughly researched community demographics and parish data; interviews were conducted of pastors, parish staff, and parish steering committees; subsequently, additional parish town hall gatherings were held. The painstaking research and thoughtful discussions led to the decision to consider modifying the two named parishes (cc. 50, 127, 515, §2).

5. On September 30, 2020, the *Pastoral Plan for Blue Ridge Area (Deanery V)* was promulgated that “the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes is not sustainable at its present level but will be given up to two more years as a parish, collaborating with St. John Francis Regis [Parish], in order to build greater vitality” (VI.B.4) to be evaluated “being measured by variables such as sacramental activity, financial contributions, and other parish data” (VI.B.4a) with Our Lady of Lourdes Parish “shar[ing] a pastor with another parish or to be pastored by a priest who serves in some apostolate with an appointment beginning no later than January 1, 2021. If at any time during this two-year period, the parish is unable to be sustained, the parish will consider two options: 1) merge with St. John Francis Regis [Parish] and close; 2) merge with St. John Francis Regis and continue as a sister church to St. John Francis Regis with a Sunday Mass and other activities as long as Mass attendance and contributions can be maintained.” (VI.B.4.b)
6. Having considered the law and the facts, the undersigned Diocesan Bishop hereby issues this Decree.

## THE LAW

Canon 515, §2: It is only for the diocesan bishop to erect, suppress, or alter parishes. He is neither to erect, suppress, nor alter notably parishes, unless he has heard the presbyteral council.

## THE ARGUMENT

7. Willingly encouraging everything in our powers to provide more suitably for the good of souls;
8. And having considered the law and the facts;
9. And having heard, in accordance with canon 50, all those whose rights might be injured by means of town hall meetings at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish of the Pastor, Pastoral and Finance Council members as well as parishioners during 2020 with the Parish Plan for the Blue Ridge Area (Deanery V) but additionally with leadership groups of parish staff and parish steering committee representatives during 2021 on March 17, April 27, May 11, and September 14 as well as parish-wide town hall meetings on May 15-16, 2021, after each weekend Mass;
10. And having heard that no donors of property or legacy were identified for Our Lady of Lourdes Parish;
11. And having heard the Presbyteral Council, in accordance with canon 515, §2 on January 13, 2022;
12. And having determined that the good of souls requires it;
13. I have determined it necessary and proper that Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Raytown, and Saint John Francis Regis Parish, Kansas City, be united and amalgamated, and that from this extinctive-union and amalgamation, St. John Francis Regis Parish, Kansas City, retain the name.

The reasons motivating this decision are as follows:

The number of registered and/or practicing Catholics at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, like much of the deanery region, continued significant decline for the past three decades in offering sufficient financial support as well as evangelizing and sacramental life to the faith community. The aging complex of

buildings, maintenance needs and real estate concerns, drastically reduced the capabilities of priest and staff in human and capital resources even to offer basic ministries, services and engagement to the faithful. Additionally, as the physical driving distance is merely 2.6 miles between the church sites of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish and St. John Francis Regis Parish, by combining efforts the evangelizing opportunities for the region and the faith life of the same parishioners can become enhanced and better served by combination into a larger community.

I, the undersigned Bishop of Kansas City – St. Joseph, exercising my ordinary power and in virtue of canon 515, §2, do hereby decree that Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Raytown, with all the rights, obligations, and privileges accorded it by law, be and is hereto united to and amalgamated with Saint John Francis Regis Parish, Kansas City.

The new Parish shall comprise the territory of the extinct Our Lady of Lourdes Parish as well as the current territory of Saint John Francis Regis Parish. Saint John Francis Regis Parish remains in Deanery V.

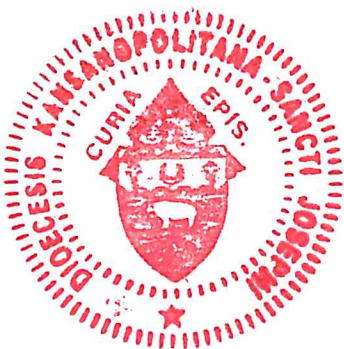
The intentions of the founders and donors regarding the temporal goods and patrimonial rights proper to the extinct Parish of Our Lady of Lourdes must be respected. In addition, the patrimonial goods, rights and obligations of the extinct Our Lady of Lourdes Parish must be defined and allocated in accordance with the norm of law (cc. 121-122).

All the parish and sacramental records of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish and Saint John Francis Regis Parish are to be properly preserved and safeguarded by Saint John Francis Regis Parish, in accordance with the norm of law.

This Decree is to be effective at the end of the day on February 6, 2022.

This Decree is to be communicated to the Pastor of the parishes concerned (c. 532). The Pastor may challenge this Decree within the peremptory time limit of ten days from the legitimate notification of the Decree in accordance with the norm of law (c. 1732, §2).

Given in the chancery of the  
Diocese of Kansas City – St. Joseph



*+ James V. Johnston, Jr.*

Most Reverend James V. Johnston, Jr.  
Bishop of Kansas City – St. Joseph

*Kenneth A Riley*

Very Reverend Kenneth A. Riley  
Vicar General - Chancellor